

V. SIGN GUIDELINES: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL

A. Overview

Signs can have a dramatic effect, either good or bad, on potential customers' or clients' perception of a business. They provide an initial introduction to the character and quality of the business. Too many different signs for one business compete with one another and make it difficult to figure out what the business is about, especially for motorists driving by at 30 mph or more. Too many signs can also undermine the overall economic image of a shopping district, making it appear blighted. A consistent approach to signage provides continuity within a shopping district and improves the readability of individual signs. The zoning regulations establish the basic standards that signs must follow. Signs may not exceed the quantity, area, height, projection over public right-of-way (ROW) and slope specified in the zoning regulations. The guidelines in this section describe and provide examples of how signs may be designed within the parameters of the zoning regulations to improve their effectiveness for individual businesses and districts.

B. Sign Types

Different Signs for Different Districts

Pedestrian-oriented districts, composed of a series of storefronts, each 15 to 40 feet wide, along the sidewalk, typically have signs that are oriented to pedestrians as well as motorists - window signs, awning signs, blade signs (small projecting signs) and outdoor dining menu boards - as well as wall and projecting signs oriented to motorists.

In **auto-oriented districts** buildings are setback from the sidewalk, often behind parking lots. Freestanding monument signs may be appropriate. In many cases, auto-oriented uses are located in shopping centers with multiple tenants. The freestanding sign shall provide only the name of the center, with the names of individual businesses listed on individual facades and/or a monument sign, and be attractive and consistent with building architecture.

Multi-tenant office buildings may find it more practical to treat their address number as their primary sign. Buildings with a group of related, but independent tenants might have a collective name with a descriptive term like Medical Building or Law Offices.

Information Hierarchy

A key to successful signage is to prioritize the information being communicated. A retail business has several messages to convey to its potential customers, including:

- Business name
- Address
- Type of goods and services
- Specific products and/or name brands carried
- Credit cards honored
- Telephone number
- Parking directions
- Business hours

Some information - primarily the name and address of the business or shopping center and one or two key products or services - needs to be legible to motorists or bus riders, while most other information can be on smaller signs legible to customers once they become pedestrians.

Sign "blight" occurs when a business has so many signs that a potential customer, whether driving or walking by, is overwhelmed and cannot sort through the information. The information should be organized and presented so it can be understood in order of importance and without repetition. For example, the name of the business is usually the most important piece of information and should be presented on the largest sign, which should be legible to motorists and bus riders. That sign may be a wall sign, awning sign, projecting sign or freestanding or monument sign and is considered to be the "primary" sign. A business should usually have only one primary sign visible along each street or parking lot that it faces.



If a wall sign is the primary sign, containing the business name, then an awning sign can be used as a secondary sign, describing the business, listing the goods or services provided, or the address, rather than repeating the name of the business. One exception to this rule is the pedestrian blade sign - a small projecting sign (not larger than 5 square feet) perpendicular to the building wall and designed to be visible to pedestrians - which typically repeats the business name or contains its logo. Figure V-1 shows the information that is most appropriate on each sign type.

Signs Oriented to Motorists and Bus Riders

For a single business or shopping center, only one of the following types of primary signs, providing the name of the business and one or two principal products and services, should be completely visible from a single location:

- **Primary Wall Sign**
- **Primary Awning Sign**
- **Major Projecting Sign**, which should be non-rectangular and have its own internal or external light source
- **Monument Sign**, which should be mounted to a base whose material and/or color and finish is used on the building with its own internal or external light source

Freestanding signs other than monument signs are strongly discouraged, except that, at a surface parking lot that does not serve a specific building or use, one freestanding sign that is 1) supported by a single pole, 2) less than 12' tall, and 3) less than 25 square feet in area is acceptable. Billboards, as defined in the Zoning Code, are prohibited in all Redevelopment Project Areas.

A business should show its address in 4 to 6-inch letters within 4 feet of an entry on each facade that has an entry.

The primary sign on the rear facade should be 75% of the area of the primary sign on the front facade.

In addition to the primary sign(s) and address, a busi-

ness may have the following secondary signs describing the business and/or listing 1 or 2 products or services provided:

- **Secondary Wall Signs**
- **Secondary Awning Signs**, in which the information should be confined to a single horizontal line positioned within 3 inches of the bottom edge of the awning and the maximum letter size is 6 inches
- **Menu Boards**, permitted only for drive-through fast-food restaurants (1 wall and 1 freestanding menu board for each auto service window), each of which is less than 40 square feet in area, less than 7 feet in height, oriented to customers on site, and lists only the business name and price of each item in maximum 3 inch letters

Signs Oriented to Pedestrians

All other signs should be designed to be viewed by pedestrians on the sidewalk or in the parking lot adjacent to the building.

- **Window Signs**, which should cover no more than 10% of the window.
- **Pedestrian-Oriented Blade Signs**, which are projecting signs, should be no more than 5 square feet in size. Figure V-3 illustrates appropriate placement and alternative methods of attaching blade signs.
- **Directory Signs** listing the tenants on an upper floor or with access from a single entry should be no more than 18 square feet in size
- **Backdrop Wall Signs**, on the rear or the side of an open display business that do not exceed 5% of the area of the wall on which they are located

C. Sign Design

Design Compatibility

Quality Signs and Creative Design. Like buildings, signs should make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the commercial district in which they are located. High quality, imaginative and innovative signs are encouraged.

Figure V-1 Recommended Sign Hierarchy

		SIGN TYPE																
	Max. Number	Wall		Freestanding/ Monument		Projecting		Awning, Marquee/ Canopy, Pylon		Window		Blade		Directory		Menu Board*		Backdrop Wall
Business name - primary sign and should be most visible	2	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓						
Brief (4-6) word description	1	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓						
Address number	2	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓										
Parking information	1	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓	OR	✓										
Business hours & phone number:	1									✓								
Credit cards honored	1									✓								
Brand names carried or goods and services offered	1																	✓
Secondary tenant names or names of upper-level tenants	1													✓				
Sales	1																	✓
Restaurant menus	1									✓				OR		✓		

* Permitted for drive-through fast food restaurants only



This example excerpted from:
Bixby Knolls Design Guidelines
The Arroyo Group



Figure V-2 Good Examples of Sign Types



A primary sign on the wall contains the name of the business.



A primary sign on the awning contains the name of the business.



A primary monument sign provides the name of the business.



Free standing pole signs are strongly discouraged. However, they may be permitted if, like the El Cholo sign above, they are small, consistent with the architecture and attractive. Large unattractive freestanding poles like the orange sign in the background are not acceptable.



A primary projecting sign contains the name of the business (El Toreo Cafe). Pedestrian-oriented blade signs are visible as well.

Figure V-2 Good Examples of Sign Types (continued)



Window signs include: name, open/closed, major products provided, and address.



Window signs do not interfere with displays in the window.



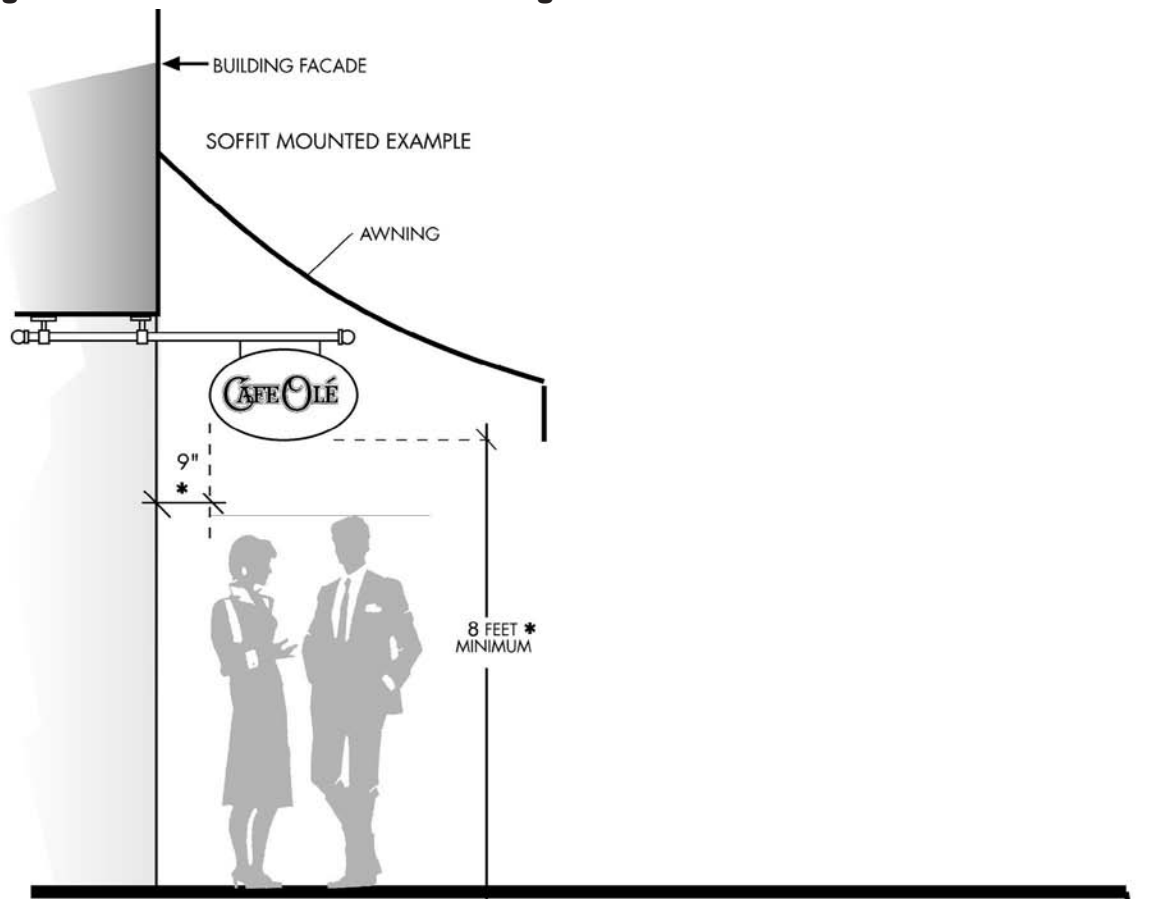
Blade signs: above top shows clearance over sidewalk; above bottom shows clearance over alley.



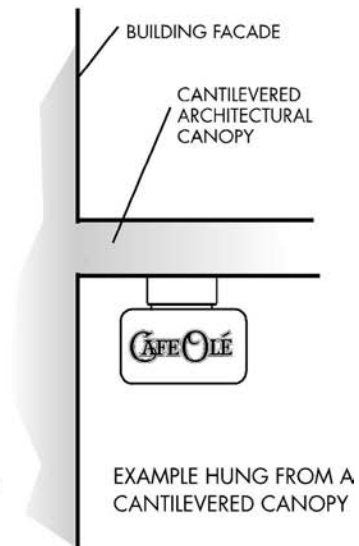
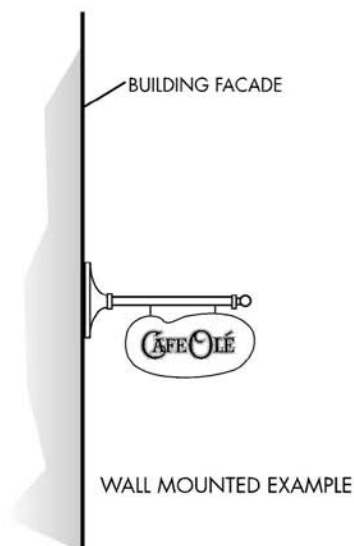
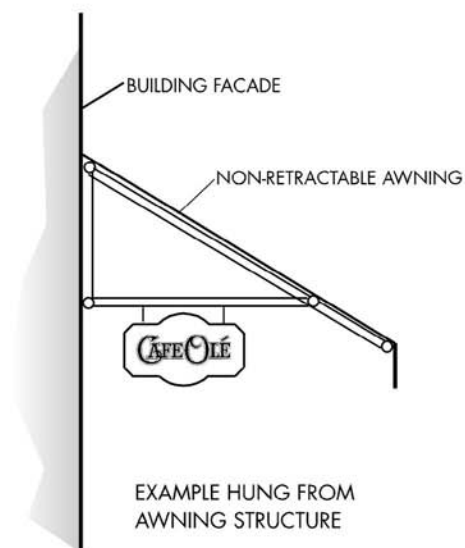
Directory sign located on exterior wall along sidewalk lists upper level tenants.



Figure V-3 Pedestrian-Oriented Blade Signs



* These dimensions must be followed to maintain visual harmony between adjacent facades



*These examples excerpted from:
Bixby Knolls Design Guidelines
The Arroyo Group*

Integration with Building Design. Signs should not obstruct architectural features. The design of signs should be integrated with the design of the building.

Proportion and Scale. The size of a sign should be proportionate to the building on which it is placed and the area in which it is located.

Coordination of Signs on Multi-Tenant Buildings. When a building has multiple ground floor tenants, whether in a storefront building along a sidewalk or in a strip mall behind a parking lot, the individual tenants' signs should share some common design elements to make them more legible to potential customers, specifically: placement on the facade and size. Letter style, colors and, in some cases, materials may vary to reinforce the individual identity of each tenant.

When multiple tenants share a single entry, they are encouraged to adopt a single collective name and sign program to avoid creating an illegible jumble of competing signs.

Relationship to Residential Neighbors. Where residential and commercial uses exist in close proximity, signs should be designed and located to minimize visibility from adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Sign Legibility

A sign's message is most often conveyed by words with symbols or icons sometimes in a supporting role. Thus, the legibility of lettering is the key to an effective sign.

Brief Message. The fewer the words the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief, succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive. Evaluate each word. If a word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it will detract from the sign and probably should be deleted.

Symbols and Logos. Symbols and logos can be used in place of words. Visual images often register more quickly than a written message. If they relate to the product sold or the business name, they will reinforce the business identity.

Letter Size. Lettering should be of an appropriate size to be read by the intended audience. Signs to be read by pedestrians should be smaller than those to be read by motorists and bus riders.

The closer the sign's viewing distance, the smaller the lettering needs to be, as illustrated in the following table:

<u>Letter Size:</u>	<u>Easily Readable at:</u>
1 inch	10 feet
2 inches	30 feet
3 inches	50 feet
4 inches	70 feet
6 inches	100 feet

Where lettering is placed on a sign panel, some blank space around the lettering should be provided. As a general rule, lettering should not cover more than 75% of the panel area.

Letter Style and Capitalization. To reflect the individuality of each business and to create interest, type styles and capitalization should vary from business to business. However, only a few lettering styles should be used on a single sign to enhance legibility. As a general rule, not more than 2 styles should be used on a small sign or 3 styles on a larger sign. Intricate type-faces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the effectiveness of a sign and should be avoided.

Letter thickness and capitalization affect the legibility and visual impact of a sign. Figure V-4 suggests variations in sign size with different type styles and capitalization.

Letter Spacing. Letters and words spaced too close together or too far apart. reduce a sign's legibility.

Sign Color

Sign color should contribute to the legibility and effectiveness of the sign.

Contrasting Colors. A substantial contrast between the background and letters or symbols will make the sign easier to read.

Number of Colors. A sign may include up to 5 colors. The colors should be combined in a way that enhances legibility. As a general rule, large areas of many different colors decrease legibility. On the other hand, small accents of several colors can make a sign unique and eye-catching.

Complementary Colors. Sign colors should relate to those of the building. A sign may include some or all of the colors used on the building exterior.

Sign Materials and Construction

Individual Letters. Individual letters and/or symbols, including 3-dimensional letters with an internal neon light source, neon or dimensional cut-out metal or plastic letters, are encouraged. Cut-out letters may be mounted on a raceway to facilitate changes or may be individually pin-mounted.

Panel Sign Materials. Appropriate materials for panel signs include:

- Wood - carved, sandblasted or etched and properly sealed, primed and painted or stained.

- Metal - formed, etched, cast and/or engraved and powder-coated or otherwise protected.
- High density pre-formed foam or similar materials. Other new materials may be appropriate if designed to complement the building design and fabricated to be durable and low maintenance.

Rectangular sign cabinets are strongly discouraged, although sign cabinets with a distinct curvilinear form are acceptable.

Compatible Materials. Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the facade and should contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes may be difficult to read due to glare.

Durable Materials. Signs should be constructed of durable materials with low maintenance requirements. Paper and cloth signs (other than awnings) are not appropriate as they deteriorate quickly. Figure V-5 illustrates some sign design issues, including legibility and quality.

Figure V-4 Effect of Letter Style and Capitalization on Sign Size.

All capital letters should be smaller than initial capitals with lower case letters:

Stardust Jewelers
STARDUST JEWELERS

Thick letters should be smaller than thin letters:

STARDUST JEWELERS
STARDUST JEWELERS

Thick all-capital letters should be even smaller than thin initial capitals with lower case letters:

Stardust Jewelers
STARDUST JEWELERS

Sign Illumination

Use illumination only when necessary. Street lights or display window lights may provide adequate illumination.

Direct Light Source. A direct light source, e.g., spot-light, is often best as it focuses attention on the sign and, at the same time, illuminates the building facade. For example, as illustrated in Figure V-6, several goose-neck lamps mounted above the sign provide even illumination of either cut-out letter or panel signs. The fixtures should be in scale with the sign and other building facade elements.

Internal Illumination. Individually illuminated letters (channel letters), either internally illuminated or back-lighted solid letters, are preferable to internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs, which are discouraged.

Sign Maintenance

All exterior signs should be kept clean and properly maintained. All supports, braces, anchors and electrical components should be kept safe, presentable and in good structural condition. Defective lighting components should be replaced promptly. Weathered and/or faded painted surfaces should be repainted promptly.

Figure V-5 Sign Design Issues



Too many signs, too many typeface, and short-lived materials.



A single wall sign is better than multiple signs, but this one is trying to say too much.



This hand-drawn blade sign is hard to read because the letters are too closely spaced and the typeface is irregular.



This panel sign, while attractive, is a little difficult to read due to the type face.



These signs compete, sending a mixed message, and one seems to cover the other.

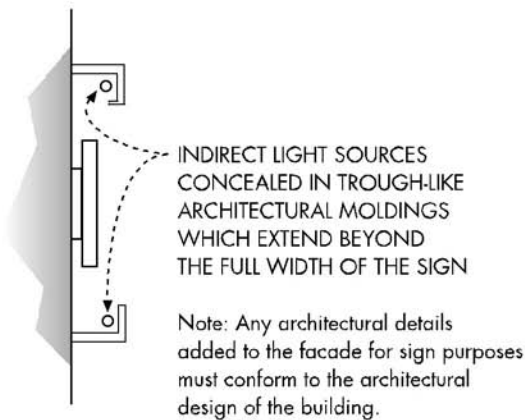
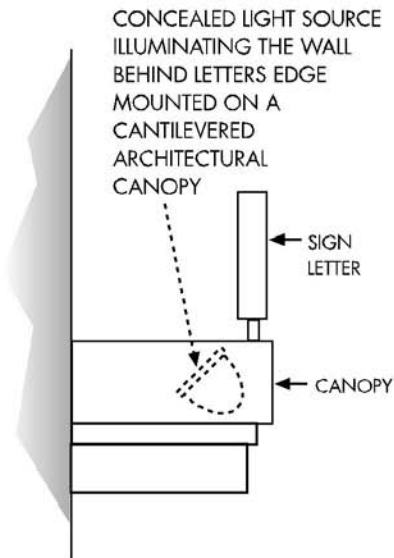
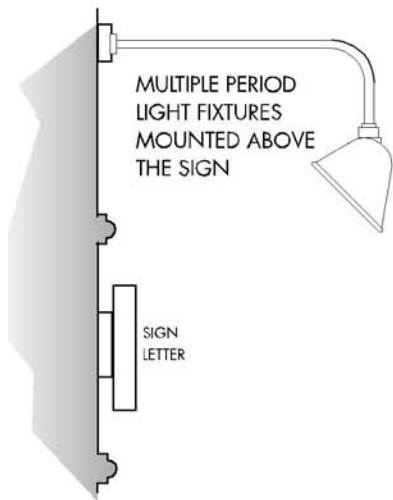


This sign should be attached to the building face and contain a briefer message.

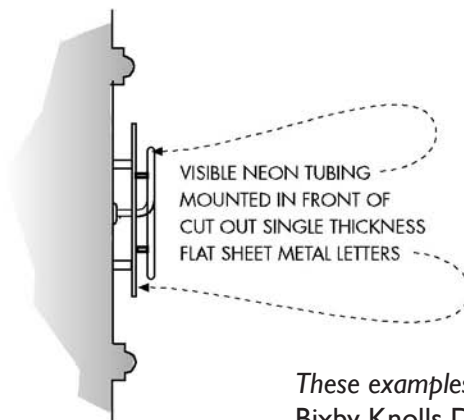
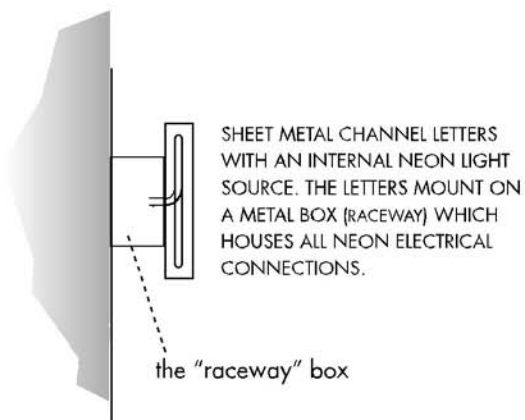
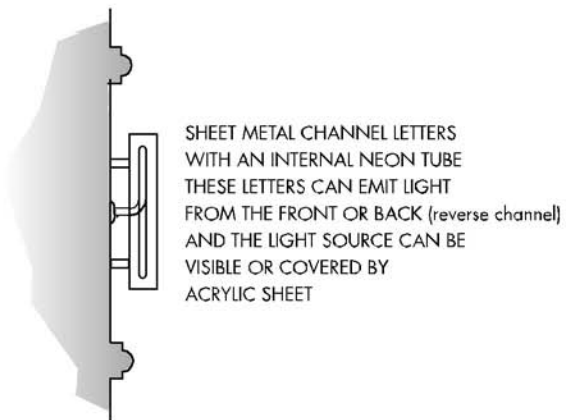


Figure V-6 Sign Lighting Techniques

Examples of externally lighting multiple letters



Examples of lighting each letter with an integral neon light tube.



*These examples excerpted from:
Bixby Knolls Design Guidelines
The Arroyo Group*

VI. STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

The North Long Beach Street Enhancement Master Plan (Master Plan) recommends the following streetscape improvements along major streets. Some of these improvements will be made by the Redevelopment Agency as public improvements; others will be made by individual property owners as they develop or renovate their properties.

Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Amenities. The Master Plan recommends that traffic calming and pedestrian amenities be provided in designated village centers and neighborhood commercial nodes, as well as along streets adjacent to new multi-family and mixed-use developments. Recommended improvements in these areas include corner curb extensions, enhanced paving of crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signals at mid-block crossings to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street and to make them more visible to motorists. Other recommended improvements include wider sidewalks in locations where the existing sidewalks are less than 10 feet wide, pedestrian-scale street lights and street furniture.

Street Trees and Parkway. Street trees are proposed to be planted along all major streets where the combined public right-of-way and public easement is wide enough to accommodate them. With the exception of Atlantic Avenue between 61st Street and Del Amo Boulevard, where the sidewalks are 6.5 feet wide, and Market Street and Del Amo Boulevard, which have 5-foot wide sidewalks, all the arterials have sidewalks that are wide enough to accommodate street trees. Street trees in front yards are proposed for Market Street.

The Master Plan recommends that, at bus stops and in village centers and neighborhood nodes, where high volumes of pedestrian activity are anticipated, trees should be planted in large tree wells (6-foot square with grates or 4 feet x 8 feet with stabilized decomposed granite or mulch). In all other locations, trees should be planted in continuous parkways adjacent to 4- or 5-foot wide walkways.

Where street trees are in parkways and parallel with medians, the irrigation system installed in the medians

should be extended to the parkways with 2 bubblers per tree. In-ground irrigation systems should also be installed in any other locations where such installation is feasible. In other locations without irrigation, trees should be watered once a week by water truck (minimum 20 gallons per tree per week): for 3 years if in parkways and for 5 years if in tree wells.

Landscaped Medians. On existing raised medians on Atlantic Avenue, Artesia Boulevard and Del Amo Boulevard, paved areas should be removed and replaced with landscaping. The existing raised, unlandscaped medians on Cherry Avenue and South Street near the rail crossing should be landscaped. Where feasible, new raised, landscaped medians should be provided along the other arterials.

Gateway Enhancements. The Street Enhancement Master Plan recommends that typical street tree and median landscaping be enhanced at the gateways by additional landscaping in the medians and parkways and, for gateways at the north, landscaping of the street edges of Southern California Edison rights-of-way. Gateway landscaping would include several common elements that will be used at all gateways in conjunction with the individual landscape palette for each street. Where medians are not feasible, supplemental landscaping should be provided in the parkways.

Other Landscape Improvements. The Master Plan also identifies the need for additional pocket parks, temporary landscaping of vacant lots and back-up lot landscaping, and suggests landscape guidelines for front yard setbacks and parking lots along the arterial streets.

Table VI-1 summarizes the street improvement regulations applicable to development projects in North Long Beach. Street trees and parkway landscaping with irrigation should be provided on all streets in North Long Beach. Street lights and furniture are recommended along the 10 major streets.

Table VI-2 lists the street tree species for the 10 major streets. Street trees for other streets will be determined by the Department of Public Works.



Table VI-1 Streetscape Improvement Guidelines

TOPICS	GUIDELINES
Street Trees	
Spacing (per Zoning)	25' on center
Tree wells/parkways	Minimum 4' wide continuous parkway except adjacent to bus stops and pedestrian-oriented uses. 4' x 8' tree well with mulch or 6' x 6' tree well with grate adjacent to bus stops and pedestrian-oriented uses. Tree wells must be mulched to a depth of 3 inches with medium texture shredded wood material; low groundcover may also be added to the tree wells. Parkways must be landscaped with turf or low groundcover (see below).
Automatic irrigation	All plant materials in the parkway must be irrigated with an automatic irrigation system. Tree wells must be irrigated with either 2 bubblers near the surface, Netafim drip or equal irrigation. Turf and groundcover must be irrigated with either Netafim or equal drip irrigation or pop-up spray heads.
Species	By street - see Table VI-2
Parkway Landscaping	Parkways must be planted with either turf or groundcover that does not exceed 30" in height, so as not to obstruct visibility. Plants that require low maintenance and use relatively small amounts of water are recommended. Plants that have colorful leaves or are flowering are also desirable.
Sidewalk Dining	<p>A public sidewalk occupancy permit must be obtained, as outlined in Municipal Code Chapter 14.14. The standards in Municipal Code Chapter 14.14 must be followed, including the following:</p> <p>Sidewalk dining is not permitted on sidewalks less than 10 feet wide.</p> <p>A minimum 5' wide unobstructed path of travel must be provided on the sidewalk. Dining or entertainment areas must be defined by sturdy, portable barriers less than 48 inches in height, as approved by the City Engineer.</p> <p>All accessories to dining or entertainment must be located inside the barrier.</p>
Alleys	<p>Property owners are required by Municipal Code to provide and adhere to a regular maintenance schedule for alleys adjacent to their buildings, including litter removal.</p> <p>Building services, including trash, storage and utility structures may not be located in the alley. They should be located in an enclosed area adjacent to the alley. Parking spaces in the alley should be clearly striped, signed and available for short-term parking. Alleys should not be used for long-term vehicle storage.</p>

Table VI-2 Street Trees for Major Streets

	Sidewalks		Medians	
	Botanical Name	Common Name	Botanical Name	Common Name
North-South Streets				
Long Beach Boulevard				
North of River	<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i>	Chinese Flame	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>	Jacaranda
South of River	<i>Platanus mexicana</i>	Mexican Sycamore	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>	Jacaranda
Atlantic Avenue				
North of the Railroad	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Ginkgo	<i>Eucalyptus*/Chorisia speciosa*</i>	Eucalyptus/Floss Silk
South of the Railroad	<i>Washingtonia filifera*</i> & <i>Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'*</i>	Mexican Fan Palm/ Bradford Pear	<i>Podocarpus gracilior*</i>	Fern Pine
Orange Avenue				
Cherry Avenue				
	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia*</i>	Jacaranda	NA	
	<i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i>	Chinese Flame	<i>Washingtonia filifera/</i> <i>Koelreuteria bipinnata</i>	Mexican Fan Palm/ Chinese Flame
Paramount Boulevard				
	<i>Tristania conferta</i>	Brisbane Box	<i>Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei/</i> <i>Pinus caneriensis</i>	Crape Myrtle/ Canary Island Pine
Downey Avenue				
South of Poppy	<i>Tipuana tipu*</i>	Tipu	NA	
North of Poppy	<i>Tristania conferta</i>	Brisbane Box	NA	
East-West Streets				
Artesia Boulevard				
Storefront commercial	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Ginkgo	<i>Eucalyptus*</i>	Eucalyptus
Other locations	<i>Tabebuia avellanedae</i>	Pink Trumpet	<i>Eucalyptus*</i>	Eucalyptus
South Street				
Market Street				
	<i>Platanus acerifolia 'Columbia'</i>	London Plane	<i>Platanus acerifolia 'Columbia'</i>	London Plane
	Alternating <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> & <i>Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei</i>	Ginkgo Crape Myrtle	Alternating <i>Ginkgo biloba/</i> <i>Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei</i>	Ginkgo/ Crape Myrtle
Del Amo Boulevard				
	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Infill with existing species	

* Existing street tree



London Plane



Pink Trumpet



Ginkgo



Jacaranda



Crape Myrtle



Chinese Flame



Brisbane Box



Southern Magnolia



